

## **REVISED MEETING RECORD**

**NAME OF GROUP:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, March 19, 2015, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, Berwyn Jones, Liz Kuhlman, Jim McKee and Greg Munn; (Tim Frances absent). Ed Zimmer, and Amy Hana Huffman of the Planning Department; Kevin Abourezk from the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Chair Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for regular meeting held February 18, 2015. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by Hewitt and carried 6-0: Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis absent.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission.

Tom Moloney came forward to read a letter submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission. He thanked the Commissioners for their work, dedication, and knowledge applied to preserving historic places with the future in mind. He noted several historic Lincoln districts, mentioned the potential for job creation, and put forth the idea of collaboration with Public Broadcasting and the "This Old House" television program to bring attention to the rewards of historic preservation.

Members thanked Mr. Moloney for his kind comments and suggestion. McKee suggested Mr. Moloney also share his ideas with the Preservation Association of Lincoln (PAL) and various neighborhood associations.

**APPLICATION BY LINCOLN PATIO & AWNING FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 6125 HAVELOCK AVE. IN THE HAVELOCK AVENUE LANDMARK DISTRICT.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** **March 19, 2015**

Members present: Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn; Francis absent.

Zimmer stated that this item came forward last month. Since then, the sign has been updated with the business name instead of a web address. They still prefer the awning form. It doesn't directly cover the tile roof above, but does duplicate it. There is very little drainage and it more of an ornamental facade.

McKee asked if there would be a change in the color choice.

Zimmer replied they still show it as a purple, but it has moved more towards a burgundy.

Munn said last time we discussed our preference that there not be an awning at all since the roof itself creates that feature.

McKee stated it looks much better than it did using the business name instead of a web address. Johnson added that now the phone number will still be difficult to read if driving by doesn't detract from the building, it is the awning that is the issue.

Munn said he still thinks it detracts from the building and he is not sure what the point is.

McKee mentioned that this action reversible; awnings don't last forever.

Jones said the purpose is the visibility of the business name. Munn agreed, but believes it could be on the building rather than the awning.

Kuhlman asked if it would help if it were more like the angular awnings on the adjacent building. Johnson noted that even if they were less curved, they would still be lower on the building. Munn agreed that it would be better, but probably would not suit their needs.

Munn went on to say that the awning kills the building. It would be fine on a taller building.

**ACTION:**

Jones moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for work at 6125 Havelock Avenue in the Havelock Avenue Landmark District, seconded by Johnson. Motion for approval failed 2-4: Hewitt and Johnson voting 'yes'; Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn voting 'no'; Francis absent.

Zimmer concluded that he will communicate with the applicant. McKee said a canvas sign could have a place on this building and we are glad to see at least some small improvement. Kuhlman added that it just needs to be a more sensitive design.

**APPLICATION BY BRYAN MEDICAL CENTER FOR A CERTIFICATE OF EXPECTATION ON GROUNDS OF HARDSHIP OR INSUFFICIENT RETURN FOR DEMOLITION OF SOPHY TEETERS NURSES RESIDENCE, A LANDMARK AT 1650 LAKE ST. ON THE BRYAN WEST MEDICAL CENTER CAMPUS, AND FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR A MEMORIAL GARDEN ON THE SITE. PUBLIC HEARING:** **March 19, 2015**

Members present: Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn; Francis absent.

David Reese, Vice President of Clinical Support Services for Bryan, came forward and thanked the Commission. He introduced Wade Stange, an architect with Davis Design and Don Sheets, Director of Facilities. This building was constructed in 1928 with funding from the John Teeter Family. The ashes of both John and Sophy are currently held there. In 1940, an addition was added. The Bryan Independence Program drug and alcohol rehabilitation program started in 1971 and moved to the dorm when the school of nursing closed in 1976. In 2014, the new Independence Center was built just to the west of the now vacant dorm building.

Issues with the vacant building create major impediments for future use. The hospital has done a great deal of investigation about potential use for the building and its current condition and what they would have to do to make it usable. The structural live-load limits the use. Bigger issues include the existing exit stairs which are extremely narrow and difficult to widen due to the placement of the exit doors, very low ceiling height, and exposed piping. The HVAC equipment would need to be replaced, and that would involve expansion of those rooms. The toilets do not meet ADA standards. The elevators have code issues. There are foundation issues in the northeast corner which need major work. The conclusion of the analysis of these many problems is that it would be cost prohibitive to renovate this building.

For those reasons, Bryan would like to repurpose the entire space. They propose adding more green space by creating a memorial garden to honor the history of this building, Bryan West Campus, and the Teeter family. The new area will also include some parking for access to the memorial. The total cost is estimated at \$500,000.

The garden shadows the structure of the original building. North of the area will be open grass space and the hospital itself. There is a walkway to allow staff and neighbors to enjoy the space. When you enter from the north, there would be pavers leading to the original portico of the dorm. That portico will be reconstructed if it cannot be moved from the original building. This creates an atmosphere of a hallowed memorial. There is a seating area in the middle looking out to key historical aspects, including some original grates, and the cornerstone of the building. Included subtly, to avoid vandalism, the urns with the ashes of the Teeters. Other aspects of the building would be symbolically represented, and all will be surrounded by a

beautiful garden.

Mr. Reese said they had a great turnout at a neighborhood meeting on February 26<sup>th</sup>. There were approximately 30 people in attendance. Overall, it was very positive.

Larry Everman, Irvingdale Neighborhood Association President, stated he is a member of a board of six. Four of the board members attended the neighborhood meeting and saw the same presentation being shown today. The building was given Landmark status in the 2000s, when previous neighborhood leadership embraced saving this building and finding use for it. Since then, things have evolved to a point where the building cannot be purposefully reused. The Association board voted unanimously in support of the proposed memorial.

Reese stated nursing alumni supported the memorial and commemorative bricks from the building will be offered. A photograph and the front door of the building will be preserved in the museum within Bryan West. The Teeter family was also supportive of these changes.

Munn asked how the Near South Neighborhood Association reacted to the proposed changes.

Everman stated that he spoke with Near South representative who needed to confirm with his own board first, but that they would support Irvingdale's decision. Kuhlman asked if there had been any official communication from Near South. Reese answered that there could be an email today or soon. Johnson added that they probably have not had a meeting since that neighborhood meeting.

Everman went on say that Irvingdale has traditionally been in favor of preserving any historical building within its footprint; based on the discussion with Bryan and the Teeter family, they are comfortable with the decision. Munn agreed that the project shows sensitivity to all parties.

Jones asked the cost of the new Independence Center building, and if the memorial was the exact footprint of the old Teeter building.

Reese answered the new building was \$6.5 million. The memorial is about half of the original footprint of the building. Zimmer confirmed.

Jones went on to say that the purpose of this commission is preservation. He is squeamish about the demolition of a historic building. The exterior is beautiful. The building should have been maintained. Munn sympathized with the significant challenges with the existing structure.

Don Sheets, Director of Facilities, stated that it isn't simply a matter of maintenance, but the limited accessibility throughout the building. Wade Stange added that with the interior architecture, there are significant limits to what can be done. The openings along the main corridor are only around 30 inches. Munn said that unless someone is going to donate the \$10

million to renovate, then the building is just going to continue to deteriorate. At least there is a new purpose proposed here, rather than just wiping it off the map.

Johnson stated that he is also sympathetic to the situation. His main concern is that it will no longer have a Landmark Designation. What changes could occur in ten years without that protection? He would like to guarantee the green space and memorial would remain.

Zimmer clarified that the Landmark designation is a zoning category on that piece of that ground. They have not applied to change that zone. Until that action were taken by the City Council, the ground remains protected. They are also bringing you the build-out in respect to the removal of the landmarked facility. The entire site is covered by Special Permit; there is no "hospital zone". So there is a continued public process even if the Landmark designation were removed. He reminded the Commission that under their regular schedule, they would not act on this request until next month.

Kuhlman stated she appreciates the presentation and the thoughtful manner in which this project has been presented. She questioned the intent of the Landmark designation at that time.

Everman stated he thought it occurred in 2002. The leadership at that time took on the cause of trying to save this building for what may have been a preliminary discussion of the use of the building, or the reality that it may not be repurposed. Kuhlman stated there is confusion about this since the property has always belonged to Bryan. Reese answered that at that time, Bryan was just starting a huge phase of construction, so there was a lot of hubbub about what would be done with the area. They took on keeping that history there. Kuhlman stated that it is just unfortunate that changes to the building were not considered at that time, in the master plan.

Zimmer said that a key intention of the Landmark designation was to spur discussion of the historic value of the building, should the day come when demolition was a consideration. There was anticipation that it would not stay the Independence Center. This way, historic issues are aired. Neither the hospital nor the neighborhood had a long-term plan for the building, but it was recognized that it was handsome, historic, and at-risk. There are no financial benefits in historical designation for a not-for-profit hospital.

Reese stated the struggle they've had is in finding a use for the building.

Hewitt stated for the record that he has been a two-term member of the Board of Trustees at Brian, and the Chairman of the Board, and trustee of the Bryan Foundation, so will not participate in the discussion or vote of this item.

McKee noted that this is the oldest building on the Bryan West campus.

Zimmer its original design and addition were done by Davis and Wilson. It has very high-style colonial revival elements.

Munn asked if there would be any salvageable material from the building? Reese answered that plans are already in place to use some components of the building, but this can be further explored.

Johnson stated that he would like to stay on the regular schedule and wait a month in case there is public comment, though he is leaning of being in favor of the proposal. Kuhlman agreed that she would like to request more official information from the family and the other neighborhood. Zimmer stated he will follow up. John Teeter was a jeweler and lawyer. Sophy was his wife. He was a major supporter of the hospital, so his key gift was the nurses residence in her honor. Reese asked if they needed to return in the following month. Zimmer said he would typically advise attendance, though it is not required.

**APPLICATION BY BRETT HARRIS FOR DESIGNATION OF 2742 N. 48<sup>TH</sup> ST., THE FORMER WESLEYAN HOSPITAL AND NURSES TRAINING SCHOOL, AS A LANDMARK.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**March 19, 2015**

Members present: Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn; Francis absent.

Zimmer stated this is the landmark request on this building and support of the rehabilitation of the building and conversion to apartments. There is a plan in place. It was built in 1906. Other than loss of windows and a coat of paint, there is good preservation on the exterior, including all of its pressed metal cornice and finials. It did lose its "1906" date plaque from the west cornice. The division of the building originally corresponded to the front portion being Hotel Cecil, and the back portion being Wesleyan Hospital. The hotel only lasted a year, then the entire building was the hospital, which operated until 1912. The month it closed, it reopened as a boarding house with rooms for two, four, or six. Only the windows may reflect some of the character of the two original uses. The high basement level has cast concrete foundation and ample light from garden-level windows. A rear door has been filled in but overall, the exterior has a good state of preservation. It is only 5 feet from property south of it.

The interior has been apartments since at least the 1920s. It was once owned by William Seng, who also built other apartments in University Place. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is situated high above the sidewalk. The interior was gutted out by the preceding owner and so is stripped.

There are two staircases, seemingly one to the hospital and one to hotel, in the original configuration. Dr. William Coffin, who was previously the superintendent of the insane asylum, who opened this as a hospital and nurse training school. His house in on the other end of the block from this.

After nursing schools began to be regulated by the state, small nursing operations fell into disfavor as the larger hospitals became predominant training schools. Wesleyan Hospital's rapid demise is indicative of the changes going on with hospitals and training at the time. The applicant, Brett Harris, would also like to get it on the National Register for the Federal tax credits. There is question whether the interior question will block that.

Local landmark designation gives Harris potential for state credits. He is not saying that the project is dependent on these, but they are parts of the financing he is trying to put together as a project. He would redo it as apartments again. This is in support of creating the opportunities.

Zimmer are arguing its eligibility on the basis of hospital and nurse training history, noting that there is no interior to show what it looked like as a hospital. So the local designation and its benefits may be as far as this project can go. McKee noted that there is such a rich history with this building and encouraged attempting a National Register nomination. McKee stated that he thinks this is one of the key buildings in this community.

Zimmer said there were very good research sources with multiple public announcements about the stages the original hospital project went through. There are many very rich and detailed accounts of the events of the building. He cited the work of his planning colleague Stacey Hageman on this project.

### **ACTION:**

Johnson moved approval for the designation of 2742 N. 48<sup>th</sup> Street, the former Wesleyan Hospital, as a landmark; seconded by Jones. Motion for approval carried 6-0: Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis absent.

### **DISCUSSION AND ACTION:**

**Request by Lincoln Planning Dept. For a resolution of endorsement of FY15 grant application to Historic Preservation Fund of the U. S. Dept. Of the Interior, through the Nebraska State Historical Society.**

Zimmer said this is a program we have participated in since 1983 as a certified local government. It is a 60/40 matching. We are asking for \$24,000 in cash expenditures. Some years we have used it for appropriate graduate-level interns. They asked that if we devise a project to look at mid-century modern, they would like to more about it statewide. Based on past work, he feels Lincoln has a good foundation in understanding mid-century residential buildings, so he suggested an investigation of other buildings types such as churches and schools. That might be one to two hundred buildings they would survey. It requires your endorsement.

**ACTION:**

Jones moved approval of the resolution of endorsement of the FY15 grant application; seconded by Jones. Motion for approval carried 6-0: Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis absent.

Zimmer note that the Historical Society is doing a biennial conference in May. He is working with Rubin Acosta for our current grant to cover Commission members' registration if you wish to go.

**Staff Report**

Zimmer stated that Planning Department must issue the Certificate of Allowance on the demolition of the 700 O Street building because the six months has expired. He has not heard that any actions are imminent. The Commission has done what it could do.

He also mentioned proposals to demolish the Carl Weil House on South 17<sup>th</sup> St., adjacent to the Morris Weil House at 17<sup>th</sup> & C. He has not received an applications, so the clock hasn't started. The property is on the National Register within the wider district and is part of local district. A method of addressing the parking issue could be to come to the Commission for a Landmark Special Permit to get it addressed. That approach could look at using both houses for the fraternity.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.



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